

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An economical, force-sensing “stiff” capacitive joystick includes a user-manipulable handle coupled to an electrically conductive drive plate, and an electrically conductive surface spaced apart from the drive plate. In the preferred embodiment, one or both of the drive plate and the conductive surface are segmented to produce multiple capacitive sensing elements, such that a force applied to the handle causes a slight deflection of the drive plate, enabling the force to be computed in at least two dimensions through changes detectable in the capacitive sensing elements. One or more electrical controls may be provided on the handle to accommodate different functions. For convenient construction, the electrically conductive drive plate is non-segmented, and the electrically conductive surface forms part of a printed-circuit board having a segmented pattern.